

**Political History Collection
Interview H.0001.07 : Tape 7**

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and

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Interviewed by: Paljor Tsarong
Name: Drakten [Tib. grags bstan]
Gender: Male
Age: 57
Date of Birth: 1935

Abstract

Drakten [Tib. grags bstan] was a monk official in the traditional Tibetan government. In this interview, he discusses, in detail, the political events that occurred in Lhasa in the 1950s. He also discusses the public attitude toward the political events and describes how people sacrificed their lives for their political views and the common good. He also discusses how five men came together to steal important documents and the effects it had on their lives. Additionally, he describes how the people came together as a demonstration in 1959 in order to stop the Dalai Lama from meeting with the Chinese at their military headquarters, as well as how the Emergency Command Center was started.

Tape 7

Q: I wanted to ask you about Tseja Gyentsenla and - what was the name of the other person?

A: Tema Jokala.

Q: Yes, Tema Jokala.

A: As I mentioned to you yesterday, Tseja Gyentsenla was with Kungö Chemmo and the Magji, the one who was in the inner group. Yes, he was in it. Kungö mainly discussed things at the meetings but the person who was keeping the documents, doing the correspondences and making relations, like a "house mother," was Tseja Gyentsenla. He had all of these responsibilities.

Tema Jokala's monastery is Trip Tsecholing and his name is Lobsang Nyendra [Tib. blo bzang snyan grags]. He was a good talker and a very determined and decisive person. So he (Tseja Gyentsenla) was a very reliable person and his confidant was Tema Jokala. Tema Jokala did not know about the inner discussions, but it was a situation where the two of them were discussing these. Anyway, Tema Jokala knew whatever work Gyentsenla was doing and he was the one who received instructions and did the running around. For example, whatever printed posters or letters that were distributed by Jenkhentsisum to be used for publicity used to arrive there. They were short notices like news. About a page each in length, not many. They contained notices to be distributed to the people. These arrived in the hands of Gyentsenla. He needed to distribute them to all the dzong and the estates, and it seemed that he had his own connections on how to do this.

Finally, when the uprising began in Norbulinga, the Dalai Lama had already left and the areas could not be held and we were losing. On the evening of the 10th [of 2nd Tibetan month], the cannons were fired and it continued the whole next day. On the night of the 11th, maybe when it was getting dark, Laja Tempala [Tib. bstan pa lags] said that he was going to the Gombokhang to make an offering [Tib. ljags skyem]. And he saw Gyentsenla and Tema Jokala at the Gombokhang. They were sort of looking inside an amulet and they said sternly, "Now, don't come around here, don't come!" He said that he went to the Gombokhang and then left and did not ask them anything, but they were sort of angry. Then he came out of the Gombokhang, descended the stairs. Coming out of where the trunja takes place at Norbulinga, there is a large tree on the east side, and as he passed under the tree he heard two shots. Bang! Bang! Since there was gun and cannon fire outside, he said that he did not take any notice. So he said he just left. Later, it became known that the two gun shots Tempala heard were shots that they fired at each other. They shot and killed each other. The reason was that all the contact letters from India were left in their quarters, including the letters to and from the various dzongs. So all of those who were at Norbulinga could not return home and all of a sudden they were surrounded by the Chinese. Since all the letters were in their quarters, if they were caught by the Chinese, they would be severely tortured and interrogated, until they could not bear it and certain information would come out of one person. Such type of people were really

risking their own lives and were voluntarily serving the government. Even if the name of one person were to be given away, it would be regretful and then that person could name somebody else, and then another and so on. They could not even bear the responsibility to flee together. Actually, the two could have decided to take off together and if the Chinese caught them, then they could have shot each other. If they got through, then, that's it. But even with that plan they could not risk anything going wrong, thinking that if they ever got into Chinese hands, then it would be too much. So with the idea that they did not wish to do any talking and did not want to endanger those who had confided in them, they shot each other. Even when they first began their work, they went into it with the pledge to sacrifice their lives given the grave condition of the religious and political entity, which was at a critical point of life and death. So when the actual situation called for it, they, as they had previously pledged, made the decision and took their own lives. So regarding this matter, what they did was something extraordinary, something to be remembered for having sacrificed their lives for their political activity and for the common good. At that time, all that was said was that Tema Jokala and Gyentsenla shot each other, but there was not one who said it was this way and that way. So this time Kungö Tempala came, and I asked him about numerous matters, and he was the one who said that this is what transpired between Tema Jokala and Gyentsenla.

Q: So previous to this, no one knew anything?

A: We heard that they shot each other, but nothing was clear. This time Kungö Tempala said it. So these accounts are verifiable and not made up.

Q: Later did you hear anything? Did they find the letters?

A: No, nothing at all because the persons involved were no more. So there were no names coming out. Among the officials, this is how they had sacrificed their lives earlier. For example, even later, the Chinese held a document examination [Tib. yig zhib]. The Chinese called everyone to the Shöl Pargang, the people who had from the earliest time been pro-Chinese. These trusted ones were sent to work on the documents. One of the people was the lay official Driyü [Tib. 'bri yul], the other was Shölkhang Jedrung. These two were in China when Liushar went with the tour group in 1952. Even from that time on, these two were the first who stood for change. From our perspective, we treated them just like the Chinese. The two were all of a sudden, voluntarily, for change. So since they were like this, later they were put to work in the Shöl Pargang on all the documents of the government, including all of the personal communications of the Dalai Lama both at the Potala and Norbulinga. So while they were examining the documents, they were saying that there were very important documents, and it was heard that the UN was being petitioned from India and they wondered if there wasn't anything to think about [stealing] some important documents. So Driyü, Jaktra [Tib. lcags sprag], two from Tashilhunpo, and a lay official, five in total, began saying a few things and gradually as they began to confide more in each other, they thought that they might steal a few documents and it would be good if they could send them to India. So the five of them made a pledge [Tib. mna'] and decided to steal documents. Internally they consulted with the Panchen Lama. They told the Panchen Lama that they were thinking along these lines and that they must have his approval. That the Panchen Lama need not work with them, but that he should also make a pledge with them.

The Panchen Lama went along with this saying that it was alright, however he did not want to be physically a part of the group, but he told them to go ahead with their plans and that he would have solidarity with them internally. He did not want to leave his name and make a pledge because if they were found out, then not only them, but he also would be destroyed. So while they were looking for the documents, they found the Simla Treaty. It was wrapped in satin and there were 5 folds [Tib. lteb 'go], and each page was sealed with the Kashag's seal. Driyü said, "Shall we make off with the Simla Treaty?" When they went to and from the office, they were searched bodily so it was not possible to do so. Besides, they thought that the Simla Treaty may also be in India with the Indian government and the English. Then they asked what other important documents there were. They were perhaps putting aside documents they thought were important. Among the most important were the previous Dalai Lama's correspondence with Russia, Marx and Lenin. There were quite a lot of them including the petitions [Tib. snyan zhu] that they had sent. They thought that it would be good if these documents got to India. The reason was that though Marx and Lenin did not openly talk about an independent Tibet, the way the documents were phrased, one could clearly see that they did accept a fully independent country ruled by a king. This is what they said, adding that even Russia (before the revolution) did the same.

They also said that there were correspondences with Chiang (Kai-shek) and the old China. Whether it was Chiang or some emperor, I don't remember, but it also stated in a letter to the Dalai Lama that, "There is no need for you to write "to our feet" [Tib. zhabs drung du], just write as between equals; we are the same." So there were such letters that stated that, so whether one was independent or not could be clearly seen from the documents. Especially the correspondences with Marx would be useful, because Marx was known all over the world.

Finally, these guys did get the documents together and really made off with them. They had planned that the two of them would go to India to report. Now, there were five of them who had made the pledge, right? Among them, Chape [Tib. chab spel], I think it may be Chape, had made the pledge together with them, did all the work, but when the person was sent with the documents, he turned them in. Not only were they arrested, but they were all imprisoned. It's just amazing what they had to say about their difficulties in prison regarding torture when being interrogated. Finally, Driyü made two suicide attempts. In one attempt, the place where they were staying had a glass window. He broke the glass with his fists and on the jagged edges of the glass he dragged his neck back and forth, but he couldn't drag it on the point [Tib. gnad la ma 'khel]. He was just all bloody, and he was taken for medical treatment and allowed to recover. Then he was tortured again. On another attempt, he somehow came upon a piece of small metal band used for tying loads. He sharpened it and went to cut his throat. Once again he was not successful. Finally, from the five, two died in prison. One of the people was Chape, (and Chape wasn't in prison,) so there were only 4 in prison. Among the four, two died in prison. Two came out alive. Among them, one was Jaktra. Finally the "sentence" stated that they were not to say a word about what went on from the time they were arrested to the present regarding the way they were interrogated or what they were questioned about. They said, "You can only say that the matter was decided, but nothing else concerning it. We are releasing you on this condition. If the matter becomes known, then there is no other alternative but to return here (to prison)." So they had "nothing specific to charge them."

What the accused did was to absolutely deny everything. They said that the way the Chinese interrogated them was to take them aside and question them one by one. The Chinese told them, "All of the others have confessed. So from your side, are you going to admit it or not? If you do, then you will get a lighter sentence, and as far as the country is concerned, we have already listened to what has been said. So you choose whether you want to be black or white. If you want to save your own life, then do so since we are giving you an opportunity." They said that all of others had confessed. However, previously they had made a serious pledge, thinking that it would be good for faith and politics and had already sacrificed everything and now was not the time to lose it all. So no matter what was said, they all said the same thing and since nothing came of it, they were released. When they released them, there was no sentence. Even these things are just amazing, thinking that it would benefit the common effort [Tib. spyi don], they sacrificed their lives since they were already living under him (China). These days people say that the kudrak handed it all in and they didn't do anything and because of that it happened like that [lost the country]. The way the Chinese came, even if we had put aside all of our petty problems and were fully united, it was a situation where they had fully won power in their own land and came in full force to Tibet, saying that they were making their moves in Asia. It was such a situation and it was not the same as the earlier ones like the Liujun Army. It was never a situation where a regional force invaded. This communist force, no matter how united we were or whatever we were, we could never have stopped their invasion of Tibet. Even if all the 6 million Tibetan people were all heroes, we could not have challenged this power. This is the reason why we lost to the Chinese, and not some various little reasons here and there that we came under the Chinese.

What the Chinese were saying was that the people were trenyog and slaves [Tib. tshe g.yog]. If this was true and we had so badly exploited the miser and given them unbearable hardships, they may not have risen up when they were being held down, but, after the Chinese had full control and they used the miser and coached them into rebellion, even then, they could not get the miser fully on their side. In 1959, they said the three big ngadag comprised of 5 percent of the population. That 5 percent were all imprisoned without exception. The rest were all trenyog. However, in 1966-67 while the two groups Nyamdre and Gyenlo were fighting each other, they were all "poor people." Finally, what happened was like the nun, Nyemo [Tib. snye mo] Anila. All the appointed leaders, zhuren, tsugdrang, the dzong, and leaders of the people were all from the poor and "bad" elements of the old society, like blacksmiths, butchers, drifter-beggars [Tib. phyogs sprang]. Under their leadership, for example, in Nyemo, they killed all the Chinese that were there. The leaders were all trenyog and there was not one member of the three big ngadag. Let alone the ngadag class, there was not one who was born of that class. They were all from the poor section, but when it came to the Chinese, they killed them. So regarding the Chinese, everyone was united of one mind. It was not a case where we had a bad political system and the miser found it unbearable and revolted. They say that the government officials did not do a proper job. Yes, true there were those who did not do so. Amazingly, there were those who had been fed by the Tibetan government from generation to generation, but followed the asses of the Chinese [Tib. rgya mi'i rkub la gyugs mkhan]. So those were one kind and we can put them to one side. But to say that all kudrak didn't do anything at all is not the case. How many have you seen that have sacrificed their lives?

Q: From among those who made off with the documents, who did you say they were? Chape was one, then Jaktra.

A: Chape, Jaktra, Driyü. They were three among the Tibetan government officials.

Q: Shölkhang was not in it?

A: No. Then two from Tashilunpo. I don't know who asked the questions but I was the one who transcribed the tape. The tape is with the Information Office. Right at the beginning of the document there was no indication as to who was the one asking and answering the questions. The question was erased and only starts with the answer. Later, upon investigation, we found out that it was Jaktra. That is because in the document he says, "Driyü and Chape, and the two Tashilunpo people, and the Panchen Lama and I." So when it came to the "I," he would not say who the "I" was. When I said to the general secretary [Tib. drung che] that I didn't know who the I was, he would not say. The one who asked the question was someone who spoke Khamba dialect. I don't know who he was.

Q: And the one to whom the questions were asked?

A: That was Jaktra. He had spoken on the tape. I transcribed the tape.

Q: Where was the interview done? India?

A: As I said, it was not indicated.

Q: Did he come to India?

A: Yes he did. Since I was working in the Information Office, the tape was given to me by the General Secretary. The important ones were given to me and I transcribed them. Anyway, all of this that I have said to you are in all of those documents.

Q: Tell me about the situation you mentioned last time about Kungö Namseling and the Sera Monastery, and the question of guns and ammunition.

A: In Lhasa there was this person who was a fairly large trader by the name of Gen Lamey [Tib. rgan bla med]. He was previously a muleteer for a Tsarongpa (Khamba) at the age of 25. Later he carried loads of round brick tea and tobacco on his back and went to Tsöna and other villages selling the tea and tobacco and buying odds and ends in return. That's how he started his early trading. Then he herded donkeys and came to India. Later he became very rich and his quarters at Drepung were huge. He lived alone, and never had a wife or relatives who shared his livelihood, and then one day he died. Since he was wealthy, various affiliates (khamtsen) such as Drepung Nyare [Tib. nyag re] Khamtsen, Sera Nyare, and Ganden Nyare came to argue where he and his wealth belonged [Tib. thob khungs]. Since he was born in Traya [Tib. brag g.yab], they came forward. Then there were some who said that they were his relatives. In this manner about six different factions came to settle the matter in court. Since there were so many claimants, the government got involved and created the Chöjin Legung [Tib. mchod sbyin las khungs]. Gen

Lamey's wealth was given to the three great monasteries together, and within the monasteries it was set aside for those who studied at the dharma grove [Tib. chos ra]. Usually, in the tratsang and tsogchen assembly halls, all the monks congregated and each got the alms according to their shares, whether it be two, three or other amounts. Then, according to the verdict, everyone in the dharma grove got equal shares whether one was the umdze or a lama. Annually there were four salaries, the spring salary [Tib. dpyid phogs] during the spring debating semester called the Jichö Chemmo, the winter debating semester called the Günchö Chemmo, the summer debating semester called the Yarchö Chemmo, and the autumn debating semester called the Tönchö Chemmo. So the ones who were serious in their studies received this. The "capital" was put to use and the interest from this was distributed at the dharma grove. For this purpose, the government appointed persons to be in charge called the thothampa [Tib. do dam pa] of this Chöjin Legung. Taktra Dzasa, Kundeling Dzasa and Kungö Namseling were the three thothampa. And from the three great monasteries, representatives were appointed.

The main fund that came from Gen Lamey's wealth included his house. The office met at Gen Lamey's Hall. In addition to that fund, the government said that others could contribute to this and it issued an alms collection letter bearing the Dalai Lama's seal [Tib. sbug dam slong yig]. By then, the Chinese had already come and the situation with the land was very precarious. And since the contributions came at that time, there were a lot of estates offered. Many gave estates. If we consider the large contributors, Shatra gave a lot of land from their Orong Garjag estate in Kongpo. It was referred to as Chitong Nangtong [Tib. phyi gtong nang stong], where the income was equivalent to 1000 khe of butter and 1000 khe of barley grain. Lhalu gave the Kongpo Gachag Estate or something, and likewise, others gave various estates. So in short, Namseling said, "If you want to lease the lands then do it, and if the three great monasteries want to plant it themselves, then do so." So he told the abbots and the chandzö of the three monasteries to have a meeting and decide what they wanted to do.

About 18 of them were called to a meeting. If the meeting was to start around 10, then the Kungös came on time and so did a lot of the others. Then there were the Sera abbots who had to ride and they came a bit late. So until everyone was present, they were just sitting around and talking about various things. At that time, Chushigandru had gone to Shang Ganden Chöngor and taken out the arms [September 1957]. So there was a lot of talk about this and the fight that took place at Nyemo. The others talked about this. Then Namseling said, "Yes, this has happened. That's good. The government cannot give arms, right? The Chinese wouldn't allow that, right? But one day the Chinese are going to take it all, right? They are not going to let things be, so what they did was okay." The monks were relating this news of the Khambas with some astonishment, but Namseling was saying that the action was correct. Then Namseling said, "Our main government armory was in the military headquarters. Then during the time of the two sitsab, they moved all the arms to Sharchenjog at the Potala, thinking that if the arms were left at the Tibetan military headquarters it would be too close to the Chinese military headquarters and that it would be easy for them to get their hands on it. So just like the Khambas did, the three great monasteries could also just go and take them out." He openly said this in front of all of these monastic representatives. They were not going to reply to his statement, but like a brain, he put this in their minds. He sowed the seeds. So whatever was needed was discussed and the meeting was over. But looking in hindsight, he had already sent his wife and children to India and he went over to the Khambas and never returned. He had voluntarily set himself up as a reactionary.

Later, when the cannons were fired at Norbulinga, around dawn, the Sera monks flowed [Tib. lug] into the Jera canal, and using it as cover, moved via the bridge on the Drepung route, climbed from the back side of the Potala where the elephants were kept and then descended down to Tse Sharchenjog to get the arms. About 500 monks took part in this. They took whatever they could carry. Many rifles arrived, but they didn't have time to shoot. However, the monks and the arms all arrived in Lhoka. But it was no use since they could not organize and hold onto some land. After the Dalai Lama left, there was just commotion and nobody was taking orders from anybody. Anyway, if they were able to organize and do something, they had the guns and it just goes to show that if you take the risk to take them it would be helpful. It's very difficult to come out and say, isn't it? But Kungö did and I thought, how bold of him to say that because if it got back to the Chinese, then his life would be in danger.

Q: You were working there, right?

A: Yes, I was a staff official at the Chöjin Legung and that's how I came to know about it.

Q: You mentioned (in our last meeting) that you met Kungö Tspön Namseling at Varanasi (Benares) and he told you something about a meeting that was held at Yuthok House [Chinese headquarters] regarding certain people that were to be arrested or killed. Tell me about that.

A: Yes. At Varanasi when the Higher Education Institute [Tib. mtho rim slob drwa] was opened, the Dalai Lama was invited for the opening ceremony. Kungö Namseling arrived from Gangtok and was at Varanasi. At that time I was a reporter stationed at Dharamsala [Tib. bzhugs sgar gsar 'god pa] for the Darjeeling Freedom Press, and since the ceremony was large, I went to see what news I could find. I met Kungö there. Since I used to work with him at the Chöjin Legung, we knew each other personally and socially too. So I went to see him. He said, "Today, the two of us, let's go for a stroll and I will tell you about the pilgrim sites [Tib. gnas bshad]. For each of the sites, I have put a wooden placard and written about the site in Tibetan. I do this out of my own pocket. Otherwise, when one walks by all you see is an empty park and one doesn't know what is what. So I enquired carefully and put a placard. I'll show you."

So we went and among the flowers we stopped from time to time. It was during this time that he said, "At Yuthok House there used to be a lot of meetings of the Communist Party members. You know, there are a lot of Party members who are Tibetans. These meetings used to take place between 1 and 3 a.m. in the morning.

At these meetings they had decided to do away with 19 important government officials and even found the various assassins who pledged to do that [Tib. khas len pa]. Among the Party members who were there are people I know. They reported all of these to me and my assassin was to be a Jola (a clerk), who used to sell pecha texts at Shasarsur [Tib. sha gsar zur]. He came forward as the one to take responsibility [for him]. They told me this. Anyway, the revolt came pretty soon, otherwise, they had this internal plan." This is what Kungö said while we were just resting during a stroll at Varanasi.

Q: Last time, you mentioned a meeting at the Shabden Lhagang. It was the Tsogchen Gyeyong (Full Assembly), right? Later, you said that Kungö Tarala's task was to head the Kagö Command Center/military headquarters and Kungö Kundeling was to head the Dzadra (Emergency) military headquarters. So, the meeting and this, how did it come about?

A: At the time when the Dalai Lama was taking his Geshe Exam, it was said that the Chinese had sent an opera troupe to celebrate the occasion and requested that since he was already going to the Tsuglagang, he could stop by the Chinese military headquarters, the Silingpu military camp, to see the show by the troupe that had specially come for this purpose. Finally, it was decided that the Dalai Lama was to attend the show on the 30th of the 2nd month of the Tibetan calendar, that is March 10th. The day before, after the gag (Secretariat) was over, it was said that 2 tsendrön had to go as the Dalai Lama's entourage. After the gag was over, the tsendrön on duty who had to stay there was my uncle. He had brought a cushion out into the sun and it seemed like he was writing some notes since that position entailed a lot of entries.

He said that Barshi Jedrungla came and he (his uncle) said to him, "Tomorrow the Dalai Lama is going and you were not around, and it would have been good if you could have gone with him, but now it's too late." [Note: Barshi had not attended the Trungja that morning]. Jedrungla said, "It's all over now, it's over! If it was decided that the Dalai Lama would go tomorrow, it's all over now. There's nothing to be done!" My uncle said, "Yes, I know. It's so that we cannot bear the responsibility of the danger [Tib. nyen 'gan ma bzod pa], what to do now?" While they were conversing, Kungö Gusung Depön was asked to come to Silingpu (the Chinese military headquarters). When he went there he said that there was a general [Tib. dmag dpon], I don't recall his name now. He said he knew this general very well and even used to come and see him. That day he was somewhat stern and said, "Tomorrow the Dalai Lama is coming here, did you know that?" He replied that he did not know.

"Anyway, the Dalai Lama is coming here tomorrow and the reason why you are asked to come here is to let you know that, usually when the Dalai Lama attends meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region he has with him 25 Gusung (Bodyguard Regiment) soldiers and likewise, many government officials come along with him. Tomorrow, he is coming to the military camp for a drama and a large entourage will not be required. Just a few will do. Many soldiers will not be required but if one or two come along it is alright. Up to the camp you can come with your arms, but once there, you will have to hand them over. You are not allowed to take any arms into the military camp. Likewise, the Sawang (Ministers) and others are not allowed to have arms in their dresses and the Sawang are allowed only 1 servant. All the people, the military will line up from Norbulinga to the Lhasa Shöl stone pillar (Tib. Doringgang [Tib. rdo ring sgang]). When one gets in front of the Potala, one has to pass the bridge, the Kelsang Samba [Tib. skal bzang zam pa]. Up to the bridge, all responsibilities will lie with the Tibetan government. Past the bridge, the People's Liberation Army will receive the Dalai Lama and take him to the camp, and nobody else is permitted. This you will have to tell the Mayor, the Mipön of Lhasa and the Shöl Legung."

The next day when they were to receive the Dalai Lama, they did not even invite Gusung Depön to inform him about what the arrangements were. There was no sign that anything big was going to take place. Nothing was ready. While my late uncle and Barshi Jedrung were conversing, Gusung Depön came by. They asked him to come over to them. He asked them what they were doing. They replied that they were just talking and had heard that tomorrow they were going to invite the Dalai Lama to the show, and that this seemed so risky that they couldn't bear the responsibility of his life's safety [Tib. sku phywa blos 'gan ma bzod pa]. They were discussing this and were extremely concerned. Gusung Depön said, "Yes, I just went to the military camp and they are saying all of that." This greatly startled the two of them, and then the three wondered what there was to be done. Just then, Tseja Gyentsenla came by and said, "My goodness [Tib. 'o dzi], now what is there to be done?" Then Tarala was coming out of the Nangmagang office, so there were now about 6 of them gathered and they all wondered what there was to be done. They said that the situation was so risky that maybe there was a way to go as part of the entourage. "So we should go and see Kungö Chemmo and try to cancel the procession." Then Drönyerchemmo said, "Yes, it is so risky that we can't bear the responsibility at the military headquarters, however, last time when they made the invitation, it was done through the Jigyab Khembo, and so we should all go and ask the Jigyab Khembo (Gadrang). The Chinese did not ask through the gag (Secretariat) [that Phala headed, but through the Jigyab Khembo." So Chemmo got up and they left together and went before the Jigyab Khembo, Kungö Gadrang [Tib. dga' brang]. They said, "Since the Dalai Lama is going to the military camp, there is much risk to the Dalai Lama. Could you arrange for some people to go with him as his entourage?" Gadrang replied, "What are you talking about!? The Dalai Lama can clearly see the past, the present and the future [Tib. dus gsum gsal gzigs]. There is no way I can tell the Dalai Lama to do this and that. What he tells me to do, I do. What not to, I don't. Whatever he commands I do. From a lower position I cannot tell him to do this or that [Tib. bzo mas bkod]! If you need to ask such things, then you guys go yourselves and request it. The reason being you are all officials of the Nangmagang, even without being on duty. You are all the internal Gusung (bodyguards). There is not one among you who is not entitled to go in by themselves." They said that's what Gadrang said and that he was angry. Immediately Tarala got mad, "What!? This concerns the Dalai Lama's bodily safety. If you don't want to ask, then we will. We know how to ask. It doesn't matter and it doesn't make any difference. At first, since it's protocol, we came with bowed heads and we have made a request to you." But Tarala was upright and was starting to argue. So then Tseja Gyentsenla said that Gadrang got more furious and aggressive. So Chemmo told Gadrang, "We are sorry. Though the way of our requesting may not be so correct, it is concerned with the Dalai Lama's safety. Otherwise, we are not here to cause trouble, so please do not be so angry and do not misunderstand. And even Tarala can't be blamed, but do not do reckless things." They all tried to appease both of them, and Gadrang began to cool off. He said, "Yes. If we make a request, yes, so let's go," and Gadrang also got up and went with them. When they made their request, the Dalai Lama said, "I don't think there is a need for that, I don't think anything will happen. Besides, we have already agreed." So he did not accept their request and nothing was done, so Gadrang and Chemmo returned to their homes.

Then Kungö Tarala, Barshi Jedrungla, Tseja Gyentsenla and my late uncle were discussing this, and they said that it was better to deliver the message about the instructions given by the Chinese and tell the people of Shöl and Lhasa. So they went to tell the two Mipön (mayors) at Nangtsesha that the people were to come up to both sides of the Norbulinga road and not towards the Chinese side.

Internally, my uncle returned to Lhasa, so too did Barshi Jedrungla. There they told what was going to happen and that it may be better for a lot of people to go to Norbulinga because there kind of was danger for the Dalai Lama's life. At night there were such

messages exchanged from the homes. The main message was given to the Mipön about where the people were to go. When the people heard that the Dalai Lama was to go to the military headquarters, they too thought there was danger to the Dalai Lama's safety and at dawn, the people of Lhasa and Shöl "poured out" [Tib. lug] towards Norbulinga. The Trungja was at 9 a.m. and before 9, the people were just "spewing forth [Tib. lug]." The wall is very long, and the main gate was blocked and the people were not allowed to go in. So the people went to the various gates. In front of the main gate the people had flocked as if they were there to receive religious teachings, and being seated everywhere, they had blocked the route. You know there is the circumambulation route around the Lhasa city, Lingor [Tib. gling skor] that goes to Dekyilingka? Just passed that area the people had started sitting down. When we started going to the Trungja, it was around 8 a.m.

At the main gate there were about 20 odd tsidrung. The most outspoken of them was Barshi Jedrungla who was in front of the main gate and saying something. Then, just before 9 a.m., Surkhang Shape was coming. It seemed that Liushar and Shasur had already arrived. When I got there the two of them were already there. Surkhang came riding and as soon as he met with the crowd, he immediately got off. If there is someone called the most malicious and clever person ever, then it is Surkhang Sawang. He got off the horse and started moving swiftly along while his two servants followed, but they could not keep up with him. He was partly running and shouting, "You people, nothing is going to happen. Don't worry, we will go inside and request the Dalai Lama not to go today. We will request him, we will request him. Nothing is going to happen." His route on both sides was full of poplar trees [Tib. sbyar pa] and just before getting to Norbulinga, there are the two stone lions and then the steps. This way is the way towards the north and that way, the road is to Shabden Lhagang. And that way and this way there is a large road straight away. Since Surkhang came from the route and as he approached, the moment the people saw Surkhang, those who were seated got up and swarmed around [Tib. 'ur rgyag] him and started shouting, "Now, there is nothing left but the Dalai Lama's life. Don't trade him for dayang [coins], don't trade him for dayang. You better do things well!" As they said that the crowd was like a wave and swarmed in. Surkhang being too clever said, "Don't worry, we will make the request, we will make the request," and moved as fast as possible. From the main gate, on both sides of the stone floor and past it there were about 15-20 tsidrung on each line. They held hands and shoulder to shoulder, like a dancing circle dance [Tib. gzhas sgor], they held back the crowd as they saw Surkhang and all the commotion. Surkhang, who saw the monk officials immediately ran and he just made it. If he had been a step behind, the crowd would have caught him. If they had, they would have killed him.

Right after that, Chamdo Phagpalha Khenjung came. He had come riding a horse, but since there was a lot of commotion outside Norbulinga, he had returned in a different outfit. He had taken off his robes and instead wore layman's clothes and a white cloth mouth mask, rode a bicycle, and took a Mauser pistol. Since he could not ride the bicycle because of the crowd, he was walking it. Then he left his bicycle behind the stone lions

. As he did that, the crowd who were around there swarmed in thinking that he must be somebody because of the Chinese white mouth mask and the Mauser pistol. He was stoned to death.

Then Sawang Sambo was coming in a car and instead of getting out of the car, the car started honking. The people wouldn't move, obviously. Then he got out of the car. Since we were at the main gate, all we saw was something yellow. Just then a stone hit his head and he was knocked unconscious. Inside his car were 4 Chinese bodyguards. Sambo was kind of a higher magji or something, so he was entitled to a car and 4 bodyguards. When he got out of the car with the 4 guards, that's when he was stoned and he was immediately taken to Dekyilingka. Ngabö, it is said was coming and he was near Tsomönling. Somebody had told Ngabö that Sambo was stoned, so Ngabö did not go to Norbulinga and went straight to the Tibet Autonomous Region [building]. That's what happened that morning.

Then Sawang Surkhang and the rest of the Kashag went to have an audience with the Dalai Lama and he told Surkhang, Liushar, and Shasur to go to the Tibet Autonomous Region and tell them, "Today the people have created such a commotion. So I cannot come today and after the people have left, then we can comfortably meet." When they came out of Norbulinga, the scene was a sea of people. A car was taken out from the inside [Norbulinga] to take them to the Tibet Autonomous Region [Note: Actually to the Military Headquarters]. The people checked the car and even looked under the seats. The others stayed within the main gate and Surkhang climbed the narrow stairs to the top of the main gate and spoke to the people. He said, "Today the people [mimang] have arrived here and must be very concerned about the Dalai Lama going today. You can all breathe a little easier now. Just now, the Dalai Lama himself had said that the people have come and that they should not create such commotion and should return. The Dalai Lama will not be leaving today and he has sent us to go to the Tibet Autonomous Region to give this message. We are going and you all should be content. What you wanted to request has been fulfilled. The Dalai Lama is not leaving today, so you can relax and leave. We are leaving now in a car, so please make way for it." Then he descended.

While he was talking, Shasur and Liushar were waiting. At the southern side of the main gate they were facing north, and on both sides of the path leading to the barbed wire fence, they were resting against a tree. Then Sawang Surkhang came there. There were about 30-odd representatives of the people who were inside the gate. While the Sawangs were standing there, about 8-9 of them came forward and laid a khata scarf on the ground. Among them, were the one in charge of the coracles, Gopön Nyerpala [Tib. ko dpon gnyer pa lags], the one in charge of arranging horse corvées in Shöl, Kundeling Tatongwa [Tib. rta gtong ba], and Manang Abo. They were the more outspoken ones. They said, "Just now you are going to go to the Chinese to talk. Just now from the rooftop you told the people to return home content. That what they had come for has been achieved. That the Dalai Lama is not going to go. Today the people have arrived and you tell them to return. What if the Dalai Lama goes tomorrow? Are we supposed to come here like this everyday? Please don't say such things that are meant to trick the people. If you have to go to the Chinese to talk, then let it be known that the Dalai Lama can move about as he has traditionally done between the Potala and Norbulinga and back, as well as to go to the Tsluglagang, but not like it is some pilgrimage and going here and there. Do not make the decision. One person making the decision for 100 people [Tib. brgya kha gcig gcod]. Isn't the Dalai Lama known as the "Universal Jewel [Tib. spyi nor]" of Tibet. From this day on, when the Dalai Lama has to move about in the nation [Tib. rgyal khab], you are not allowed to make any decisions without the consent of the people. Regarding this, you talk with them and make a clear cut decision like the proverb, "cutting the meat with the bone [Tib. sha chod rus chod]," and if you can come to such an agreement, then the people will leave. Until that is agreed upon, the people will not leave, even if you tell us." So with a khata, Gopön Nyerpa

and Kundeling Tatongwa said that and Manang Abo also said that, but the former two were the main ones. Those were the exact words since I was there and I heard it. Then the ministers left.

In reply to what was said, Liushar said, "You guys don't gather around the gate, blocking it and making a lot of noise and commotion. Go a bit further to the park rather than blocking the path, shouting, with the Dalai Lama hearing all the noise and being uncomfortable. Go a bit further away to the park." From among the people there were those who lived in the same courtyard and those who knew each other. So they gathered around each other and occupied areas. Some were sent to Lhasa and they brought food and containers with them. Around 12 in the afternoon, Norbulinga resembled a place where travelers had come. They went to the park and it was filled with people, and the whole place was a cloud of smoke. There were people going back and forth. They were bringing their carpets, bedding, food items, et cetera. So they stayed like that. The situation inside Norbulinga was that they sent a message telling us to come to a tsondu gyendzom (Full Assembly Meeting) for all above the trunztog rank, including the representatives of the people. Usually, when the Dalai Lama moves about, the military has to come. So they had already arrived early in formation, drums beating. The abbots of the three great monasteries were all there too. The military and the monastic representatives were usually needed and all the officials were there. Usually, one does not have such a large Trunztog, but that night, messages were exchanged in this emergency situation and all of the tsidrun and lay officials had come. When the tsondu gyendzom took place, all the people were there already. The meeting took place for two or three days and then it was moved to Shöl Pargang. When the meeting was moved to Shöl Pargang, it was a hragdu [Abbreviated Assembly meeting] where the members were voted in. There were about 80 some odd people. This was not a tsondu gyendzom, but a Abbreviated one, though it grew out of the tsondu gyendzom. But since the Dalai Lama was still at Norbulinga, all around the palace the people were still there. Therefore, in the Shabden Lhagang at Norbulinga where the meeting took place, an Emergency Military Command Center, Dzadra military headquarters was started. Since the Dalai Lama was at Norbulinga, and now that the people were involved, there had to be a command center, Kagökhang. So a select group was formed. The heads of this command center were Kungö Kundeling and Kungö Tarala. They were voted in. Khenjung Tempala was a representative of this. Our uncle was a representative of the Shöl Pargang and so was Barshi Jedrungla. The first meeting where votes were cast was the meeting ordered by the Dalai Lama to alleviate the anger of the Chinese and to subside the Khamba problem [in 1958]. So this meeting was the second one where voting was adopted. In the Kagö military headquarters, there were about 19 people.

Q: What was the reason for voting?

A: The reason was that they were looking for people who did not have relations with the Chinese, people who do not stand with two feet in both places. There were about 19 people. I asked around and had all the names of the people who were in this as well as the names of the people in the (Tibetan) Women's Organization. It was all in the information file. Now, I don't know. Anyway, this is how the command center formed and how the tsondu gyendzom took place at Shabden Lhagang. When it was moved to Shöl Pargang, an Abbreviated Assembly was made from the tsondu gyendzom consisting of about 80 persons. What was said in the Shabden Lhagang was what I told you yesterday about what Taring, Kundeling and Tsarong said. Aside from this, on the morning of the 5th day, Norbulinga's range was taken and two cannons were fired using the palace as a target. One shell landed in the rear of the palace, but within the wall of the palace. Another shell fell in the field outside the palace wall. So the cannons were fired on the 5th morning.

Q: So they were taking some range?

A: It seems like that. After this, one morning Kungö Tempala was there. He was the more elderly one among us. The rest of us were young officials, and including Tempala, there were 10 of us. We said, "There's no use in going home in the evening and coming here in the morning. Whatever it is, now there is nothing to think about except the safety of the Dalai Lama, and because of that, it is better if we all stay here at Norbulinga." So the 10 of us discussed and borrowed the quarters of the Dalai Lama's monk official bodyguard, Simgag Chantrengpa [Tib. cha 'phreng pa], and stayed in his bigger room. We all laid our beddings on the floor. Then the 10 of us pooled in 30 dotse each and with about two servants, we got a horse cart, and from the Lhasa market, told them to buy food supplies. Some brought things from one's quarters, but we said that that wouldn't be required and we told them to just buy whatever we needed from the market. So we stayed like that.